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— My grey goose quill,
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will.
BYRON.

What is the language of angels? Of what nature is the communion of pure and disembodied intelligences? Do they use real sounds such as we can form any conception of, which are communicated by a purer medium, of finer capacity, and which gives the vibration of its particles the tone of feeling, warm from the heart of the speaker? Or have they not a mystic mode of communication of which man can entertain no idea?

If their element be uncreated essence, is there not something in its nature which is incon-sistent with the idea of verbal colloquy? Is it not altogether and in all, life & intelligence, per-vading and absorbing in itself the angelic hosts and the spirits which have been disen-thralled? is not every thought read in its very conception, in the mysterious region of separate, yet commingled intelligences?

We know that there have been communi-cations, between the invisible world and the inhabitants of this earth. In the morn-ing of creation, when the Deity himself communed with man, not by visions or dreams, but by immediate converse, as the sacred historian informs us, how was he revealed to proper faculties, or how could they bear the voice of eternity? was it heard in the breeze, in the undulations of the air or the murmur of the consecrated grove?

We know that angels have conversed with man. They veiled the light of im-mortality from his eye, they put on hu-man exterior and communed with him by oral articulations. But what is the nature of their communion with each

other? If spirits speak is it not in living words, wherein all their purity, their knowledge, their essence is poured out? Is not the ofhenal melody mute, when their lyres are heard - Is not the chorus of the morning stars silent with rapture, and does not heaven tremble with ecstacy?

Such are the wanderings into which we are all occasionally led. Crude and useless as they ever must be, we were drawn into this train of interrogatives, by reflecting on the nature of embodying thought its imperfections and the difficulty of detecting them. We intend in the present essay to make no attempt whatever at any metaphysical investigation, in which any one can at pleasure involve himself and none can extricate him to his satisfaction. The simple path we shall follow, is not unworthy the pursuit of the most lofty intellect;- we own that we are utterly unworthy to tread in it, but we shall endeavour to sail through this region of doubt as lightly as possible, without clogging our pinions or dazzling our vision

who can detect the progress of thought, in its conception and passage through the mind? We might as well ask, who can detect the electric fluid in its course? In their subtlety, in the swiftness of their movements, in their quickening, vivifying power - they are alike; similar emanations from the pervading essence of all things. Language is natural to man, but proves an imperfect medium of conveyance for his ideas. The more the deficiency is felt, the involuntary impulses of nature (we use involuntary in its vulgar, but illegitimate acceptation) betray themselves the more; the countenance kindles with burning intelligence, struggling for communication - gesture is employed abundantly. This we observe in foreigners, imperfectly acquainted with our language; and in the French especially.

But with all the resources of genius, and perfect acquaintance with language, how much of the fervour and quickening spirit of thought is lost in embodying it in characters which are artificial in their origin, and in words more artificial in their structure. There are no two minds alike in nature; no man or woman

thinks on subjects which combine two ideas together in the same course of consequences and deductions. Unless therefore a speaker a writer can lay bare every impulse and the mingling directions of each, none can entire ly enter into his feelings and his thoughts. How important an attribute of genius, is it then, to possess this power of development! It is laid down as a general principle, that genius will always by its virtual energy, discover and adopt the peculiar mode, best calculated to communicate its workings and by which their celebrity may be established. We are inclined to skepticism in this doctrine. At least we believe, that from the force of habit, from the influence of opinion, from perversion of taste, from want of proper acquaintance with language, the exceptions are more numerous than the examples. In the last particular, no one can say that natural fire of intellect however brilliant and unquenchable, can by its own power without artificial assistance, so display the beauty of its radiance, that man shall adore and

bow down before it.

How many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear!

With all the assistance of information, precedent and language, to paint to the life the workings of mind, is indeed a difficult task. The impediments are twofold; in the manner in which the mind conducts its own operations - and in the defects of the mechanism by which it is exhibited.

Who, in the ardour of composition, has not fevered and agitated in the conception of his thoughts to language. The giant-energies of mind outpace the tedious progress of mechanism; they scorn the trammels of method; the monotony, the creeping steps of the manual operation, irritate the brain burning with aetherial intelligence; a crowd of ideas rush in before their time, the magic mirror of memory presents a confusion of images; and, ere they can be embodied, the vapours of oblivion ascend along the surface and veil them from the sight; we gaze like the noble Surrey, when the wizard commanded the shadows

to pass over the fair Geraldine - we gaze intently, - but it is an vacancy - they are lost, irreparably lost. The mind thus lost in the destruction of harmony and the jostling visions that assemble before it, till the vision aches and the brain maddens, 'in its own eddy boiling and overwrought' loses sight of perspicuity - communicates to its tones a wilder'd energy, - but presents no distinct idea to the cool, unimpassioned eye of the reader.

These are obstructions, that must operate in a greater or less degree, in embodying thought in every language, in every stage of its progress. we leave them; for the very abstract contemplation - our own experience - the conclusions they suggest - the weakness of humanity - the intellect that has perished, without sympathy and without admiration - the awful state of derangement and total absence of reason, which has resulted from these causes - these are subjects in which we ourselves should be lost. They are intimately connected with the poetical temperament, and poetry loves to dwell on them; - but they form the dark side of mind. The perversity of nature

leads man to contemplate them, until he becomes the victim of his own folly; let him who wants to be happy avoid such dangerous sympathy! Let him who is conscious of a self tormenting imagination, keep its aberations under control and fly to the soothing and peaceful paths of literature and the mild offices of social life!

We are wandering wide. To return to the difficulty of embodying thought in language, arising from the imperfections of the latter. It is necessary here, to make: tion an exception, to all remarks of a general nature. These are the Holy Scriptures. Let us contemplate, for example the Psalms. It is one proof of their inspiration, that the words indeed do breathe and burn with thought: gether, if we consider them sacred songs as mere literary performances, it be owing to the felicity with which the words are put to: gether, or the apt introduction of simile and metaphor - or the peculiar nature of the customs and scenery of the country in which they were composed - or from whatever physical cause it

antes, if from any - the poetry of scripture always excites in the mind a train of imagery of the most beautiful and applicable nature and most happily connected with the moral or religious principles, expressed and inculcated. Skepticism may assign whatever reasons it's perversity can suggest for this preeminence which the scriptures possess in the condensed but vivid embodying of their inspirations. None will avail, until other poetry can be produced, which the universal approbation of mankind and the fiat of successive generations shall pronounce equal to that of the bible - "Vana spes! fallax imago!" No mortal fingers again may sweep the strings of the harp of the royal minstrel.

Among profane writers, Horace is most justly celebrated for his curiosa felicitas; this is his absorbing excellence; this is that which makes him a never failing, never tiring companion. Self Love, we apprehend, has much to do with our estimation and admiration of this writer, as well as with the poetry of scripture; - speaking of it, let it be remembered, as poetry. We are always

best pleased with our own conceptions; and when an author, by his magic art can communicate to his embodied thoughts, the inspiration which called them into being; when words suggest to the reader of taste much more than is contained in their mere expression;- then will he be delighted with the group of imagery arraying before his eye;- and he will admire the author and laud him, because he is pleased with himself.

In attempting to account for the peculiar effects of the curiosa felicitas of language, we cannot forget him so easily who is the great profane master, whom we have always venerated as such, loved as a bosom companion and consulted for advice and authority;- and who has so often made us pleased with ourselves. Horace had not what we call in modern days, an imagination of a high order. In the odes in which he attempts sublimity, he is seldom successful. We shall not repeat the other common places of critics- but place any scholar of the common order, in a situation where he could enjoy the company of only one poet- and

his choice would be easily determined. Proud and ever verdant are the laurels of the bard of Venusium. And yet in acquiring them, he did not toil up the steps of Parnassus with hurried and agitated steps; - he roved at his leisure through the plains around, and plucked their flowers and quaffed Castalian nectar, with little reverence, but without presumption, with caution, but with no exertion.

It is the essential attribute of this curious felicity, that like mercy, its quality is not strained. The Psalmist's inspiration and the poet's natural faculty, were alike familiar and easy to them, as they are to the reader of their effusions. Pope, the imitator of Horace, had not this gift from heaven. His versification is easy, his lines melodious - but this is merely mechanical, however great an adjutory it proves to the poet. That which the reviewers have denominated the 'eternal vivacity' of Pope, is not natural - it is evidently forced; a little amuses us, but we soon grow tired and are put to as much anxiety and pains in keeping up the first spirit with

which we commenced perusing his productions, as the Poet was, when on the rack of exertion.

But a few great men have possessed this natural power of embodying their ideas in a terse yet all communicating form-ated however their language may be translateable, so as to convey the same general idea, not only the spirit and soul of thought evaporates in the operation, but the curiosa felicitas is also entirely lost. So mysterious, so unanestable is its nature. There is no metempsichosis in genius. All imitators have proved, that they had no more the intellect of their model within them, than Pythagoras had in him the soul of the hero, who was at the siege of Troy. The warrior yet lives upon earth in the records of his gallantry and daring - the writer lives in his embodied thoughts - but no fortuitous contingencies of the same nature as them, which called into action the first, will again develop a similar character; and no accidents of nature, education and

and local relations will again produce genius of congenial temperament, operating in the same manner as those of the writer who is gone.

We will again mention the Psalms as the most eminent examples of this; although from their nature of their composition, they can scarcely be quoted as fair instances. Innumerable are the different attempts that have been made to versify the songs of Israel to adapt them to modern melody and at the same time to preserve their nature and spirit. All have failed utterly and the progress of time seems only to have put at a greater distance the hope of success. The old version of Sternhold and Hopkins is said to be closer to the original, than the translation we at present have in our bibles. But venerable as this compilation is, and however accurate it may be, we cannot work ourselves up to the proper pitch of enthusiasm in its favour.

Their uncouthness startles the ear of mo-
dern refinement. Some of the sublimest
passages in the Psalms, when wrought
into the unpolished staves of their old
translators, irresistibly provoke a smile.
This is not the effect of the change in
our language; for antiquity always com-
mands respect from every one, except the
Goths and Vandals of mind. We must
therefore draw the conclusion, that the
beauty of the Psalms depends in a very
great measure upon the structure of the
sentences and arrangement of the words;
that their majesty is lost in a modern
dress; and that no change can be made
in the mode in which their inspirations
are embodied, without entirely destroy-
ing their beauty and commanding preem-
inence. Indeed, there is one essential
constituent of sacred poetry, which the
difference of modern versification and
the troublesome restraint of rhyme

compell all versifiers to lose sight of- we speak of the paralled sentences and repetitions of the same idea in a dif:- ferent form, which is prevalent through: out the whole body of Psalms.

But a great impediment is the superabundant redundancy of modern language. Of this duffaulty of embodying thought- owing to the defects of language, we intended to treat, when we set about this number. We have been led into a preface, longer than the subject-matter. For this we must make our common excuse of the uncertain nature of our flights when impelled by so many, such ever changing currents, in regions of different density. We shall reserve our remaining remarks for another number.

S.